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Books In Review

Adams, James. *The Financing of Terror*.
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.
293 pp. \$18.95.

by David L. Thomas

The Financing of Terror is an ingenuous attempt to investigate the sources of financial support utilized by the PLO and the IRA. The author is the defense correspondent of the *London Times*, and he arrives at some astonishing conclusions about international terrorism. For instance, it is given out that the well-documented accusation of the Reagan Administration (and French intelligence, one should also add) that the Soviet Union and its allies are responsible for funding terrorist activity is nothing less than a "myth." The author opines that Gaddafi is an unreliable beneficiary of certain terrorist groups, who have made him their foil. *The Financing of Terror* also minimizes the importance of state-sponsored terrorism.

The author avows that "all the material that appears in this book, from whatever source, has been checked. Information supplied by an intelligence agency has been checked (if possible) with the terrorist organization concerned or, at the very least, with an agency in another country which is a more impartial observer."

One example of the author's professed method may be found in the introduction. Here he refers to an imaginary meeting at CIA headquarters in Langley, at which "William Casey, then head of the CIA, was in the chair." At this notional meeting, "one of the deputy directors" is alleged by the author to have described *The Terror Network* by Claire Sterling as "largely a product of the CIA's disinformation department." The author then goes on to state, "the story may well be apocryphal but it does illustrate how terrorism is a potential tool of the superpowers."

The footnotes reveal the use of U.S. Government documents and standard secondary works on terrorism, but no more. *The Financing of Terror* is another cut-and-paste job which does not address adequately the complex subject of terrorism and its finances, despite its title.

(David L. Thomas is a historian and the research associate of Professor Walter Laqueur, the Center for Strategic and International Studies.)
